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Approved For Release 2008/02/27 : GREF ID: A00975A005400330001-5

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8 December 1960

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Copy No. C ¹⁴⁷ ₅₁

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN



DOCUMENT NO. 33
NO CHANGE IN CLASS.
 DECLASSIFIED
CLASS. CHANGED TO: TS S P
NEXT REVIEW DATE: 2010
AUTH: MR 70-2
DATE: 10 JUN 1980
REVIEWER:

25X1

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State Department review completed

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8 DECEMBER 1960

I. THE COMMUNIST BLOC

II. ASIA-AFRICA

Algeria quiet but tense following Lagailarde flight from France.

LATE ITEM

Situation in Laos.

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

8 December 1960

DAILY BRIEF

I. THE COMMUNIST BLOC

II. ASIA-AFRICA

Algeria: The atmosphere in Algiers remains quiet but tense, and appears little changed by the flight of Pierre Lagaillarde from France, according to the American consul general. Comments and press articles in Algiers tend to place emphasis on the honor-breaking aspects of the flight, but there is speculation that Lagaillarde would not have taken this step unless he felt that the deadline for action was near. Security precautions continue to be discreet, with the security police remaining out of sight. Activists in Algeria have been reported planning a coup or a general strike ever since De Gaulle's 4 November speech but apparently have not been able to decide on the timing. The arrival of De Gaulle in Algeria on 9 December, or any announcement during his six-day tour of further steps toward a liberal solution, could spur his opponents to act.

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III. WATCH COMMITTEE CONCLUSIONS

[No Sino-Soviet bloc country intends to initiate hostilities against the United States or its possessions in the immediate future.]

[No Sino-Soviet bloc country intends deliberately to initiate direct military action against US forces abroad, US allies, or areas peripheral to the bloc in the immediate future.]

C. [Military engagements between Phoumi and the Pathet Lao - supported Souvanna Phouma forces are in progress in the]

[general Pak Sane and Luang Prabang sectors. Recent Phoumi military successes will probably stimulate more aggressive guerrilla action by the Pathet Lao in support of Souvanna Phouma.]

D. [Other developments affording increased opportunities for exploitation by the Communist bloc:]

CONGO: [Despite the detention of Lumumba by the Leopoldville authorities, his political associates appear to be trying to establish a pro-Lumumba regime in Stanleyville. They may seek--and possibly obtain--support in this endeavor from the Sino-Soviet bloc and from the radical African nationalist states.]

LATE ITEM

*Laos: Col. Kouprasith, Fifth Military Region commander, staged a "coup" in Vientiane on the morning of 8 December which on the surface at least appears to be in support of Premier Souvanna Phouma.

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[Leaflets circulated by Kouprasith's troops after the coup pledged fidelity to Souvanna and a determination to suppress the Pathet Lao and "young people's organizations," the latter being a reference to leftist extremist groups which have on numerous occasions intimidated the government and the National Assembly. According to a press report, such elements of the Second Paratroop Battalion as remained in the Vientiane area, made a brief effort to challenge the Kouprasith coup but apparently subsided when they encountered a roadblock set up by the coup forces.]

Although the coup seems primarily aimed at securing Vientiane against Pathet Lao and other leftist extremist influence,

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[Kouprasith and his group also profess determination to resist any effort by Phoumi's forces, now advancing between Pak Ca Dinh and Pak Sane, to capture Vientiane.]

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[Phoumi was to follow up Kouprasith's takeover of Vientiane with an airdrop of paratroop elements loyal to him from the Luang Prabang garrison, but this move has evidently been postponed.]

[Shortly after the Kouprasith coup, Souvanna informed Ambassador Brown that troops had taken over the city which were loyal to him, dedicated to neutrality, and equally ready to resist the Pathet Lao or Phoumi.]

[He urged that Phoumi be persuaded to stop his advance and stated that he was asking former Premier Tiao Somsanith to suggest that negotiations be held between his government and Phoumi's Savannakhet group in Phnom Penh. When "greater agreement" was reached there, a full dress conference could be held in Luang Prabang with the objective of reorganizing the government. Souvanna reiterated his belief that the Pathet Lao political front, the Neo Lao Hak Sat (NLHS), should be included in the government, but hinted, for the first time, that he might be willing to exclude it on condition that immediate negotiations were begun for the reintegration of the Pathet Lao into the national community.]

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DAILY BRIEF

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The atmosphere in Algiers remains quiet but tense, and appears little changed by the flight of Pierre Lagaillarde from France, according to the American consul general. The security police have been reinforced, but are remaining out of sight, and security precautions continue to be discreet. A French police official stated on 6 December that the Europeans, especially in the Oran area--where fewer security police are available--are "ready for new adventures."

Comments and press articles in Algiers tend to place emphasis on the honor-breaking aspects of Lagaillarde's flight, although there is speculation that he and his friends would not have taken this step, especially since their trial seemed to be going in their favor, unless they had felt that the deadline for action was near. [] stated on 7 December that neither Lagailarde, his companions, nor any disaffected French generals were believed to have arrived in Algeria. [] However,

[] Lagailarde was with General Salan in San Sebastian on the morning of 7 December and, with several others, had been trying to get air transport to Algeria; the Spanish government reportedly intends to prevent any "direct" flight to Algeria. / []

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Activists in Algeria have been reported planning a coup or a general strike ever since De Gaulle's 4 November speech, but apparently have not been able to decide on the timing. Reports indicate little likelihood of active army collusion with these activists, but the army might be reluctant to put down a massive European uprising. The First Foreign Legion Paratroop regiment, because of close ties to the Algiers area and the recent rumors that its commanding officer is to be relieved for political reasons, could be the first to break army unity and give active support to the rightists. The regiment, however, is at present in action in the Aures mountain region of eastern Algeria.

The arrival of De Gaulle in the Oran area on 9 December, or any announcement during his six-day tour of further steps toward a liberal solution, could spur his opponents to act.

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